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MONTSERRAT

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

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MONTSERRAT 1/

I. GENERAL

1. Montserrat is situated in the Leeward Islands in the eastern Caribbean, 43 kilometres south-west of Antigua and 64 kilometres north-west of the French Overseas Department of Guadaloupe. It has a maximum length of 18 kilometres and a maximum width of 11 kilometres and covers an area of 103 square kilometres. The capital of Montserrat is Plymouth.

2. At the last census, taken in 1980, the population of the Territory was 12,074. In mid-1989, the population was estimated at 12,000. Arrangements for the 1991 census continued during the period under review.

3. Since the impact of Hurricane Hugo in September 1989, which caused the death of 11 persons and an estimated $US 244 million in damage (see A/AC.109/1031, para. 3), no hurricanes were reported to have struck the Territory. Recovery and rehabilitation efforts were progressing, with local and external assistance (see para. 53).

II. CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

A. Constitution

4. The Territory is currently administered under the Montserrat Constitution Order 1989, which came into effect on 13 February 1990. Essentially, the present Constitution consolidated previous constitutional arrangements into a single document, instituted a bill of human rights, which had not been previously included, and transferred the responsibility for offshore financial institutions from elected local representatives to the Governor (see A/AC.109/1031, paras. 11-22). The Government consists of a Governor appointed by the Queen, an Executive Council and a Legislative Council.

5. The Governor is responsible for defence and internal security, external affairs, the civil service and the administration of the Courts. He is vested with reserved legislative powers necessary in the exercise of his special responsibilities, and has the power to pardon in cases involving capital offences. On other matters, however, he is normally bound to act in accordance with the advice of the Executive Council. In the absence of the Governor, the Speaker of the Legislative Council acts as Governor.

6. The Executive Council consists of the Governor as President, the Chief Minister, four other ministers, two ex officio members, the Attorney-General and the Financial Secretary.

7. The Legislative Council consists of a Speaker, two ex officio members (the Attorney-General and the Financial Secretary), seven elected members returned from single-member constituencies and two nominated members. The Constitution provides for a Leader of the Opposition.

8. Under the Constitution, the Governor appoints as Chief Minister the elected member of the Legislative Council most likely to command a majority in that body. The other ministers are appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Chief Minister. Ministers are assigned responsibility for any government business, except in those areas for which the Governor retains responsibility.

9. The jurisprudence of Montserrat is based on the common law of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, together with locally enacted legislation. The judiciary comprises the Court of Summary Jurisdiction, the Magistrates' Court, the Juvenile Court and, by special arrangement, the Eastern Caribbean Court, which consists of a High Court of Justice and a Court of Appeal. Appeals of Her Majesty's Privy Council are governed by the Montserrat (Appeals to Privy Council) Order, 1967.

Changes in Government

10. Mr. George P. Taylor was appointed Governor of Montserrat in May 1990, succeeding Mr. Christopher Taylor, who served for three years as Governor. In a press interview upon his arrival in the Territory, Governor Taylor emphasized the importance of the partnership between the Governor and the elected representatives, particularly the Chief Minister. 2/

11. In September 1990, Mr. Stanley Moore was appointed Attorney-General of Montserrat. Mr. Moore, a national of Guyana, succeeded Mr. Odel Adams, also a Guyanese. 3/

B. Future status of the Territory

Position of the Government of Montserrat

12. The position of the Government of Montserrat and the leaders of the Opposition parties on the future status of Montserrat are contained in previous working papers prepared by the Secretariat on the Territory, in particular the 1989 working paper (A/AC.109/980). Basically, all the parties share the view that economic viability should precede political independence. On 23 November 1988, in his "Liberation Day" message, however, the Chief Minister announced the intention of his Government to hold a referendum in 1990 on the question of independence for Montserrat. As a result of the devastation of Hurricane Hugo and because of the opposition of local groups and individuals, including members of the ruling party, the referendum did not take place.

13. In his statement to the regional seminar for the Caribbean, held in Barbados in June 1990, in observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960), the Chief Minister stressed that most of the young people of the Territory wanted political independence, but that they were deterred by the lack of basic infrastructure. He also stressed that Montserrat could develop a viable

economy and opt for independence if it received assistance in developing its infrastructure, and that it was a mistake to demand independence under the existing economic and physical conditions. While they believed in the right to self-determination, the people of Montserrat were hindered from exercising that right because of the economic situation. He urged the Special Committee to convince the United Kingdom to provide the necessary aid and assistance to develop the Territory in such a way that it would survive after independence.

14. The Chief Minister clarified that, for a variety of reasons, not everyone in Montserrat wanted independence at the present time. Although most people preferred to retain a special relationship with the United Kingdom, he was hopeful that the Territory would be in a position to express its right to self-determination and to join the international community of nations in the near future. In conclusion, the Chief Minister called upon the international community to grant the necessary assistance to develop the infrastructure and to provide training to enable the Territory to attain genuine independence (A/AC.109/1043, paras. 43-49).

Position of the administering Power

15. In his statement to the Fourth Committee of the General Assembly on 24 October 1990, the representative of the United Kingdom stressed, inter alia, that regardless of the size of a Territory and the numbers of people involved, United Kingdom policy was always guided by the wishes of the inhabitants. The aim of his Government was to ensure that in exercising their rights, the people of its 10 remaining dependent Territories decided for themselves what kind of political future they wanted. It was up to them to determine whether they wanted independence or wished instead to opt for some other status. In that connection, he remarked that it was wrong to equate self-determination solely with independence, since other options were also available. His Government was faithfully fulfilling its obligation under the Charter of the United Nations to develop self-government in its dependent Territories, and was assisting its dependent Caribbean Territories in diversifying their economies. 4/

Action taken by the General Assembly

16. On 20 November 1990, the General Assembly adopted resolution 45/27 on the question of Montserrat, by which it reaffirmed the inalienable right of the people of Montserrat to self-determination and independence in conformity with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; and reiterated that it was the responsibility of the United Kingdom, as the administering Power, to create such conditions in the Territory as would enable the people of Montserrat to exercise freely and without interference their inalienable right to self-determination and independence in accordance with Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and all other relevant resolutions of the Assembly.

C. External relations

17. The Territory is a member of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of East Caribbean States (OECS), as well as of the institutions associated with both groupings, including the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB). It is an associate member of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and its subsidiary body, the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee. The Territory is also represented at meetings of the Caribbean Group for Cooperation and Development sponsored by the World Bank.

18. The West Indian Commission, established by the 10th meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM, held at Grand Anse, Grenada, in July 1989, and comprised of 15 eminent West Indians, including Dr. Howard Fergus, a national of Montserrat, visited the Territory in December 1990. The terms of reference of the Commission included holding a series of consultations among Caribbean people at home and abroad. On the basis of these consultations, the Commission was expected to produce a report on the issue of Caribbean integration and on ways in which the Caribbean community will meet the challenges of the 1990s and beyond.

19. The Territory participates directly with other Caribbean Governments in regional and international conferences and programmes organized by Governments, international organizations and multilateral agencies. In that connection, Mr. C. T. John, Financial Secretary, participated in a seminar held in November 1990 on "The European Community and the Caribbean in the 1990s". CDB organized the seminar in collaboration with the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank and the Latin American Institute for Social and Economic Planning. 5/

D. Public service

20. At the end of 1990, there were 742 established posts in the Territory's public service. The territorial Government's policy concerning the public service is to control its growth and upgrade its efficiency through in-service and overseas training.

21. In August 1990, an agreement was reached between the Government and the Civil Service Association, the Nurses' and Midwives' Association, the Medical Association and the Union of Teachers, ending their dispute over salaries and wages. According to The Montserrat Mirror, the Government accepted the Civil Service Association proposal to pay a 20 per cent increase in salary and wages in 1990 and a 5 per cent increase beginning January 1991.

22. Following that agreement, it was reported that the Police Welfare Association, at the request of the Governor, held separate negotiations with the Government. A British Commission was expected to arrive in the Territory to review the salaries and conditions of the Royal Montserrat Police Force. 6/

23. In December 1990, the Governor issued a warning to civil servants regarding public criticism of the Government. The warning followed the dismissal of the daughter of the Chief Minister who criticized the Minister for Education and the ministry under his portfolio in a newspaper column. The Governor noted that while civil servants might disagree with the Government, in Montserrat or elsewhere, they were committed to carrying out the policies of the Government. The Governor recalled that upon joining the government service, civil servants implicitly accepted a limitation on their freedom of public expression. 7/

24. In his 1991 budget speech delivered to the Legislative Council on 13 December 1990, the Chief Minister and Minister for Finance stated, inter alia, that the Manual of Standard Procedures for the public service had been compiled as reference material and that the absence of training facilities, as a result of the hurricane, had severely limited the number of training programmes planned for 1990. However, overseas training programmes in both the medium and long term were continuing. He complimented students for taking the responsibility for financing their own training through CDB loans or by borrowing directly from local banks.

25. In the same speech, the Chief Minister informed the Legislative Council that designs were being drawn for new government headquarters. Rehabilitation costs of government accommodation were estimated at over $EC 7 million 8/ and an additional sum of $EC 600,000 was allocated for repairs to, and construction of, police stations.

26. The Chief Minister also stated that the British Government had approved plans for a new prison for the Territory, and that prison officers were undergoing training.

III. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

A. General

27. Economic conditions in Montserrat deteriorated with the passage of Hurricane Hugo in September 1989, which caused widespread devastation and economic disruption. Owing to extensive damage to the infrastructure, some hotels and factories were unable to operate during most of the fourth quarter of 1989, and the agricultural sector was virtually destroyed. By the end of the year, about one third of the hotel capacity had been restored and there was some revival in the agriculture and manufacturing sectors. The recovery effort brought about a significant expansion in construction activity, which partially offset the dislocation in the tourist and manufacturing sectors. 9/

28. In his 1991 budget speech, the Chief Minister stated that the economy had performed well in 1990 despite the set-back caused by the hurricane. In reviewing the Territory's economic indicators, the Chief Minister noted that the gross domestic product (GDP), which had increased in real terms by an average of 10 per cent per year over the past five years, had grown by

22 per cent in 1989 to $EC 172 million and by 54 per cent in 1990 to $EC 265 million. This was due mainly to significant inflows of capital and labour in connection with hurricane relief and rehabilitation. He observed that the current GDP growth rate was not sustainable and would decline to a more realistic rate of 10 per cent in 1991. Per capita income had increased from $EC 12,000 in 1988 to $EC 14,000 in 1989, and to over $EC 20,000 in 1990. He stressed that those rates were hurricane-related and could not be maintained. Fixed capital formation increased by an average of 30 per cent a year between 1986 and 1989 and by 50 per cent in 1990 ($EC 38 million in 1986 to $EC 121 million in 1990).

29. The Chief Minister also noted that the level of inflation, which would normally be high in a post-disaster period, was reasonable. He attributed this to a combination of factors, including price monitoring, duty concessions and private-sector responsibility.

30. The Chief Minister cautioned, however, that the growth, which had been generated through careful management, posed a challenge to the local investor. He noted that there was a surplus of bank deposits, which should be used by local entrepreneurs to foster a greater level of self-sustaining growth and development. Although the construction sector would continue to grow for a few more years, there was a need to broaden the base of the economy towards more manufacturing.

B. Public finance

31. In the draft budget for 1991, revenue was estimated at $EC 40.7 million (15 per cent higher than the 1990 estimate). Total recurrent expenditure for 1991 was estimated at $EC 38.97 million, an increase of 16 per cent over 1990. The Development Fund for 1991 was estimated at $EC 19.2 million. Total expenditure for 1991 was estimated at approximately $EC 58.2 million.

C. Agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry

32. Hurricane Hugo had a devastating effect on agriculture, causing substantial damage to crops, livestock and the fishing industry, as well as to the Territory's forests. The agro-processing industry, a major source of the sector's growth, declined as a result of the loss of inputs. In its report on Montserrat for 1989, however, CDB noted that agricultural output during the first eight months of 1989 had increased by 3 per cent, and that its contribution to GDP was also increasing. The main contributors to the growth were the demand fuelled by the expansion in tourism earnings and an increase in agro-processing.

33. In December 1990, the Chief Minister informed the Legislative Council of the Government's commitment to agriculture, and outlined the various incentives that it had provided to farmers and fishermen. These included providing subsidies to farmers for the purchase of equipment and fertilizers

and the acquisition of equipment for crop and livestock production by means of a grant of $EC 130,000 from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Poultry and egg producers recovered quickly after the hurricane and chicken and eggs farmed locally were available. The Chief Minister expected that 1991 would be a better year for the agricultural sector.

34. During the period under review, programmes of the Caribbean Research and Development Institute and the Caribbean Agricultural and Rural Development Advisory and Training Services continued to progress. There was a substantial new investment in livestock production by one entrepreneur.

35. With regard to the Territory's forestry reserves, which were also severely damaged by the hurricane (see A/AC.109/1031, para. 35), the Chief Minister announced that there was a large variety of planting material available from the agricultural plant nursery for replanting some of the most exposed hillsides, thus protecting critical watershed catchments. He informed the Legislature that the Government was launching a 20-year forestry management programme, in collaboration with the Barbados-based United Nations Tropical Forestry Action Plan. The Plan, which was comprehensive and embraced traditional forestry, agro-forestry and community forestry, would be implemented in 1991. It was subsequently reported that a team from the Plan secretariat visited the Territory as part of an examination of forests in nine caribbean Countries. 10/

D. Industry

36. The manufacturing sector consists mainly of small-scale production for local and regional markets. An electronic assembly plant provides employment to an estimated 200 persons and produces goods for export to the United States. Other plants manufacture cotton yarn and garments, as well as furniture and leather goods. Agro-processing facilities have been making an increasing contribution to the sector in recent years.

37. In its report on the Territory for 1989, CDB noted that the decrease in manufacturing exports in 1989 was exacerbated by the hurricane, which had caused most manufacturing plants to be damaged by sea water. The operation of the fledgling Sea Island Cotton Company was the most severely affected.

38. CDB also noted that the sector continued to be affected by problems of scale and scope. The small size of the domestic market and the lack of competitiveness were the main constraints. Montserrat has a very small, highly open economy. Consequently, in the absence of protection, local manufacturers must be competitive if they wanted to maintain or increase their share of the market. Given the economy's narrow resource base, manufacturers had relied on labour-intensive assembly type operations. However, because of the relatively high wage levels in the prospering tourist and construction sectors, there was increasing pressure to raise domestic wages. Manufacturers

have therefore found it increasingly difficult to attract and/or retain staff and, as a result, production had declined.

39. In his budget speech, the Chief Minister called upon local entrepreneurs to use the increased bank liquidity, as well as government incentives, to broaden the economic base of the Territory, particularly in the area of manufacturing (see para. 51).

E. Communications and other basic facilities

40. The Territory's Public Works Department has been the executing agency for most of the rehabilitation work following the hurricane. In 1990, efforts were concentrated on the reconstruction of buildings, but in 1991 they will be shifted to roads, drainage and improvements to the airport. Coastal protection will continue together with the rehabilitation of government buildings.

41. Restoration work on the airport's control tower was scheduled for completion in early 1991. Air traffic, meteorological and immigration facilities were being maintained according to standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), while the Territory awaits a new airport.

42. By March 1990, the Territory's electricity supply system, operated by the Montserrat Electricity Services, Ltd. (MONLEC), was fully operational and 4,162 consumers were being supplied with power. Plans were being considered for placing a large portion of transmission lines underground, to provide protection against disasters and facilitate speedier recovery after damage. Such improvements would require large capital investments over the next few years. In the area of alternate sources of energy, MONLEC will continue its wind resource assessment programme. Interest has been revived in geothermal energy, and a feasibility study is being conducted. The use of energy from alternate sources would reduce the import of fuel and allow foreign exchange savings.

43. Port facilities were destroyed during the hurricane and cargo is being landed on a barge on loan from the Government of Saint Lucia. Severe cracks on the barge have made its replacement necessary. The United Kingdom Government has approved funding for a new barge. The volume of cargo continued to increase; by October 1990, over 60,000 tons had been handled, more than for the whole of 1989.

44. Telecommunication services, which continue to be operated by Cable and Wireless (West Indies), Ltd., recovered during 1990. As of the end of December 1990, the number of lines connected was 3,450, compared with 3,350 in August 1989.

45. According to The Montserrat Reporter (Plymouth), the territorial Government announced on 8 February 1991 that the United Kingdom Government had

informed the Chief Minister of its intention to provide a further 12.4 million in grants (estimated at $EC 66 million) towards the cost of long-term recovery programmes over a three-year period beginning April 1991. The United Kingdom had earlier provided $EC 27 million in emergency relief assistance.

F. Tourism

46. Tourism and related activities continued to be the main contributors to the Territory's economy. CDB reported that damage to the tourism infrastructure and its image were among the most serious consequences of the hurricane. With the exception of one hotel at Plymouth, the hotel infrastructure was seriously affected by the hurricane. Estimates of room availability for the 1989/90 winter season ranged between 30 and 40 per cent. Villas were also severely damaged. News of the damage led many tourists to cancel their plans to visit the Territory.

47. As a result, overall visitor arrivals declined from 20,160 in July 1988 to 18,763 in July 1989. The number of excursionists decreased by 11 per cent. The earnings of the sector are, however, estimated to have risen during the period.

48. In December 1990, the Chief Minister and Minister for Finance, in reminding the Legislature of the significant contribution that tourism and related activities had made to the Territory's economy, both as a foreign exchange earner and a provider of employment, stressed the need for the Territory to concentrate its efforts on the service sectors, particularly on tourism. He outlined the programmes of the territorial Government for the restoration and rehabilitation of tourist sites and facilities, as well as its efforts in collaboration with the private sector.

G. External trade

49. In a report on the Territory, ECCB noted that for the first quarter of 1990 the visible trade deficit had almost doubled to $EC 36.1 million, compared with $EC 18.3 million at the end of the corresponding period in 1989. The current trade deficit reflected the 91.8 per cent increase in imports, which was related to the ongoing post-hurricane reconstruction and was mainly in manufactured goods, machinery and transport equipment. The export figure was predictably low and remained unchanged at $EC 1.1 million. 11/

H. Financial institutions

50. CDB reported that minimal growth had occurred in offshore banking services during 1989, and that the territorial Government, with assistance from the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States, had undertaken an extensive investigation of offshore banks operating in the

Territory. That had led to the revocation of 225 of 250 licences. As part of an overall strategy to foster the development of the Territory as an offshore banking centre, the Governor had assumed responsibility for the supervision of offshore banking operations in the latter part of 1989. CDB cautioned that the future growth of the sector would require an intense promotion of Montserrat as a reputable offshore financial centre and the implementation of measures to improve competitiveness. It was subsequently reported that the United Kingdom had appointed Mr. Rodney Gallagher as the Regional Financial Services Adviser for the Caribbean dependent Territories, to assist those Territories and associated regional institutions in the promotion, regulation and supervision of the region's offshore financial services.

51. In December 1990, the Chief Minister announced that commercial bank deposits had risen from $EC 40 million in 1985 to $EC 140 million in 1990, and that bank credits had been $EC 70 million in 1990, an indication of a high level of liquidity. He expressed the hope that more bank loans would be channelled into manufacturing which, as of that date, accounted for less than 1 per cent of loans, compared with 40 per cent in construction and real estate and 10 per cent each in loans to tourism related activities and distributive trades.

I. Assistance from the United Nations system of organizations

52. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continues to be the main source of assistance within the United Nations system. UNDP works closely with the other United Nations agencies and organizations represented in the eastern Caribbean in the coordination of their activities in support of the Governments' development efforts. The information outlined below was received from UNDP offices in Barbados and Jamaica.

53. During the period under review, UNDP-funded assistance concentrated on the housing sector, which had suffered the most severe damage in the hurricane. In that connection, two projects funded from Special Programme Resources were started in 1990. The first project entitled "Hurricane rehabilitation: Housing" (funded by UNDP) ($US 160,000) and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) ($US 20,000) provided for the services of three United Nations Volunteers (UNV) (two construction supervisors and one architect) in the area of low-cost housing. The other project, entitled "Volunteer construction crews" (funded by UNDP) ($US 100,000) and Habitat ($US 25,000) provided for three teams of artisan trainees from technical colleges in Barbados, Jamaica and Saint Lucia to spend their summer recess in Montserrat assisting in reconstruction and repair work. In addition, a project that commenced in November 1990 would contract a physical planner and UNV engineer/planner to assist in the preparation of a national physical development strategy for the provision of functional housing and shelter units, at a cost of $US 195,000. Other aid to Montserrat included assistance to the Montserrat Technical College, in the area of mechanical and electrical training, at a cost of $US 200,000.

54. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continued its assistance to the Territory in the areas of early childhood development ($US 10,800 in 1989 and $US 8,300 in 1990), nutrition ($US 9,500 in 1989 and $US 10,400 in 1990), women and development ($US 9,700 in 1989 and $US 6,300 in 1990), an adolescent mothers' programme ($US 10,700 in 1989 and $US 18,000 in 1990), the provision of emergency supplies ($US 6,700 in 1989 and $US 18,300 in 1990) and maternal and child health care ($US 5,000 in 1990).

55. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provided an estimated $US 51,098 in assistance during the period 1989-1991 for an ongoing project executed by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) of the World Health Organization (WHO) on "Family life education in youth development"; a population and housing census to be conducted by CARICOM in 1991; and a fellowship in health education at UWI in 1990.

56. The Caribbean office of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) participated in the execution of the above-mentioned UNDP-funded project on assistance to the Montserrat Technical College. Other ILO projects in progress include the provision of actuarial services to Montserrat and other Territories of the subregion; a study on the establishment of a national health insurance scheme; and contracting the services of a health insurance expert on the implementation of proposed changes in the public service scheme. The Territory also participated in ILO multi-island projects.

57. In 1990, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) made available the services of a consultant to prepare a document on hurricane preparedness. UNESCO also provided reading material under a joint regional programme with UNDP and ILO. The Territory participated, together with the British Virgin Islands, in an education project for Latin America and the Caribbean.

58. The PAHO/WHO assistance to the British dependent Territories in the eastern Caribbean, including Montserrat, centred on the implementation of primary health care delivery services. In particular, PAHO/WHO drafted a national health plan, established an emergency system of communications immediately after the hurricane and coordinated international relief efforts. PAHO/WHO supports the ongoing planning for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the health services. It also carried out an evaluation of the environmental health services of all United Kingdom Territories in the Caribbean, prepared a solid waste action plan and provided support in the management of landfill. PAHO/WHO assistance to the Territory also included the granting of fellowships for human resource development and the strengthening of school health and family life education programmes.

IV. SOCIAL CONDITIONS

A. Public health

59. Health conditions continued to be good by international standards. In December 1990, the Chief Minister announced that estimates for the restoration and expansion of the Glendon hospital project amounted to over $EC 6 million, and would be phased over a three-year period, commencing during the first half of 1991. In the interim, rehabilitation work would continue on district clinics and would be completed early in 1991. Clinics would be re-equipped and become operational again. The geriatric facility had been renovated and upgraded. The established medical staff had been increased and a health service manager whose recruitment was funded by the United Kingdom was expected to take up duties soon. In 1991, health service personnel would be encouraged to take advantage of continuing educational opportunities. Since by virtue of its small population the Territory could not afford certain specialists on a full-time basis, consideration was being given to two alternatives: either to have those services provided periodically, or have patients visit those specialists overseas. Both schemes were currently in operation; there was a visiting specialists' programme, in addition to an arrangement with the United Kingdom, Guadeloupe and the UWI School of Medicine for the treatment of patients from Montserrat.

B. Women and development

60. In his 1991 budget speech, the Chief Minister noted that women constituted more than half of the population and had the potential to participate to a greater degree in the Territory's development. He stressed that the Government would focus more attention on addressing women's issues in its national development plans and programmes. Technical assistance had already been requested to help the Community Services Department to formulate a national policy on women and development.

V. EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS

61. Education in the Territory is compulsory and free for all children between 5 and 16 years of age. For further details on the educational system, see document A/AC.109/980, paragraphs 40-43.

62. In his budget speech, the Chief Minister stated that the Ministry of Education had continued its efforts to improve the quality of education at all levels. Regarding primary education, he noted that plans were almost completed for the renovation and extension of various school buildings and related accommodation and that early childhood centres had planned their usual activities for 1991. Particular emphasis continued to be focused on improving the standard of reading throughout the primary system. The training of teachers in the most relevant methods of primary education would be intensified, and supervision of schools improved during 1991.

63. At the secondary level, the consolidation of the comprehensive system instituted in 1986 had continued unabated. According to the Chief Minister, the children of the Territory now had access to one of the most comprehensive education programmes in the subregion. He noted that enrolment at the Montserrat Technical College for the 1989/90 academic year had been significantly affected by the post-hurricane construction work and the expansion of the secondary education system. Steps were being taken to explore the possibility of developing the Montserrat Technical College into a full post-secondary educational institution. Additional preparation was being made to accommodate the expected increase of students in 1991. Some 250 students would complete their secondary education in 1991, and at least 90 of them were expected to enter the Technical College.

64. Major developments concerning post-secondary education included the designation of the UWI extramural education centre as the UWI School of Continuing Studies and the completion of related reconstruction work. A facility would be established within the School of Continuing Studies to provide access to lectures from the main campuses of UWI. A learning resource centre funded by the European Community would be constructed as an extension of the School of Continuing Studies complex in 1991, and would play a major role in the initial teacher-training programme.

65. After outlining other education programmes related to the public library and the school psychological services, the Chief Minister expressed the Government's appreciation to other Governments and to organizations for their assistance in the development of education in the Territory. In that connection, special mention was made of the Governments of the United Kingdom and Canada, and of the European Community, CARICOM and the Commonwealth secretariat.

66. Funds allocated by the territorial Government in the 1991 budget for recurrent expenditure on education and library services amounted to more than $EC 8 million.

67. According to information provided by the United Kingdom on 18 March 1991, 14 students from Montserrat received educational assistance in the United Kingdom during 1989, under schemes funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Overseas Development Administration.

Notes

1/ The information contained in the present report has been derived from published reports, including the Caribbean Development Bank, Annual Report 1989.

2/ The Montserrat Reporter (Plymouth), 22 June 1990.

3/ Ibid., 7 and 28 September 1990.

4/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Fourth Committee, 12th meeting.

5/ The Montserrat Reporter (Plymouth), 2 November 1990.

6/ Ibid., 10 August 1990.

7/ The Island Sun (Tortola, British Virgin Islands), 22 December 1990.

8/ The currency of the Territory is the East Caribbean dollar ($EC). One United States dollar ($US) is equivalent to $EC 2.70.

9/ The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, Economic and Financial Review, vol. 7, No. 3, December 1989.

10/ The Daily News (St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands), 18 February 1991.

11/ The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank, Economic and Financial Review, vol. 8, No. 1, March 1990.